United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Southwestern Region Regional Office | 333 Broadway SE Albuquerque, NM 87102 FAX (505) 842-3800 V/TTY (505) 842-3292

File Code: 3420 **Date:** October 5, 2007
Route To:

Subject: Proposed FY 2008 El Porvenir Forest Health Project, Pecos/Las Vegas RD

To: Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest

On October 3, Dave Conklin of our staff met with Dave Lawrence (SFNF) and Ken Reese (Pecos/Las Vegas RD) to examine a potential FY 2008 Forest Health project area in the Gallinas Watershed. This area is located just northeast of the El Porvenir Campground, and includes units designated as El Porvenir South (41 acres) and El Porvenir East (171 acres). The western sides of both these units abut private forested land.

These stands occur on dissected terrain, at about 7800 to 8200' elevations. They are predominantly ponderosa pine, but include significant amounts of Douglas-fir, white fir, and white (limber) pine in many portions. Site quality ranges from poor to moderate (< 60 to around 75). The last entry—a selective harvest—occurred more than 50 years ago. Current densities exceed 1000 stems/acre throughout much of the area. The great majority of trees are pole-size and smaller, although larger (>12' dbh) trees are common on the better sites. The incidence of ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe is very high, with an estimated 80 percent of the area affected. Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe was observed in 20 to 30 percent of the area.

The tentative prescription for these units calls for thinning (primarily from below) to achieve densities of 70 to 100 trees/acre, while reducing dwarf mistletoe (average DMR) to relatively low levels. Irregular spacing of leave-trees is also desired. A maximum cut-tree diameter of either 12 or 14 inches may be utilized here. The high disease levels will make effective treatment difficult; however use (retention) of "non-host" trees would be an effective strategy in many areas.

We recommend retaining the best dominant and co-dominant trees, including lightly infected (DMR ≤ 2) ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir where needed. All moderately and heavily-infected (DMR ≥ 3) trees should be cut. All visibly-infected trees less than 5" dbh should also be cut (since most of these would become stunted and deformed, and not become sizable trees). Healthy Douglas-fir and white pine, where available, should be retained in areas with ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe.

White pine, because of its resistance to mistletoe, will be a highly desirable species for retention in these stands. (White pines are also valuable from a wildlife perspective, since their seeds are a good food source.) Since most of the white pine here is relatively young and might easily be cut in a standard "low thinning" operation, we agreed to retain *all* the existing white pines, other than those with poor form or low vigor. White pines probably compromise less than 5% of existing stocking, so this strategy would result in "overstocking" in only a very small proportion

Printed on Recycled Paper

of the project area, and would have a minimal effect on potential fire behavior. The potential for blister rust in these stands is very low.

Treatment of this area, as described above, would provide significant reduction of dwarf mistletoe and also reduce long-term bark beetle susceptibility. Thinning between July and December would minimize potential for a build-up of *Ips* bark beetles in the slash. There is little or no road access into these stands, so virtually all the cut material would remain on-site. A combination of lopping and scattering (away from leave-trees), hand-piling, and/or mastication may be utilized to reduce hazardous fuels. A broadcast burn might be feasible within 2 to 3 years of mechanical treatment.

Please contact Dave Conklin at (505) 842-3288 if you have questions about this evaluation.

/s/ Dave Conklin (for)
DEBRA ALLEN-REID
New Mexico Zone Leader, Forest Health

cc: David E Lawrence
Joe Reddan
Gilbert Zepeda
Kenneth Reese
William Armstrong